

Update on Implementation of SB 25 and a Progress Summary of the Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup



Ray Martinez, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Workforce Education

Stacey Silverman, Assistant Commissioner for Academic and Health Affairs



1



Senate Bill 25 facilitates the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in higher education

SB 25 Provisions Completed:

- ✓ Report on Nontransferable Credit – Report to be submitted by March 1, 2021
- ✓ Common application – Added to application for students beginning in fall 2021
- ✓ Filing of degree plan/advising – Institutions began implementing in fall 2020
- ✓ Study on Core Curriculum/Meta Majors – Report submitted November 1, 2020
- ✓ Articulation agreements – Institutions could begin in fall 2020
- ✓ Course credit transfer – Institutions and qualifying school districts could begin in fall 2020
- ✓ Appropriations for specific dual credit courses – Institutions began in fall 2020.

SB 25 Provision In Process:

- Recommended course sequences – Negotiated Rulemaking Committee development underway and will meet in spring 2021. Institutions will begin reporting in fall 2021.



2

2

Report on nontransferable credit

Report on nontransferable credit – Universities and community colleges are required to annually report to the THECB courses that were taken by students, transferred to another institution, and not accepted for academic credit towards the major (assuming the student did not change major).

Universities: The first data submission included the cohort of students transferring for the first time from a community or state college and enrolling in a university in fall 2020. Institutions began submitting data in November and data were certified in December.

Community Colleges: The necessary analysis for public community colleges will be done by the Coordinating Board using existing data submissions.

The Board authorized the Commissioner to forward the report to the Legislature by March 1, 2021.

Common Application

Common application – As part of the ApplyTexas application, students now have the option to indicate their consent for an institution of higher education that denies the applicant to provide the student's application with another institution

Information Sharing Opt-in – On September 30, 2019, the ApplyTexas Advisory Committee approved the following consent language to be added to the U.S. Freshmen and U.S. Transfer applications:

Should you be denied admission to a particular degree program to which you applied, do you allow the institution to share your application for admission with other institutions that offer the degree program? Y/N

The question was added to the 2019-20 application cycle in October 2019.

Filing a Degree Plan

Students at public institutions of higher education and high school dual credit students now file a degree plan earlier in their coursework. Students enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program are required to file a degree plan upon completion of 30 hours (rather than the previous 45 hours), and high school students taking dual credit are required to file a degree plan upon completion of 15 hours.

- Students enrolled in an **associate or bachelor's degree** program shall file a degree plan with the institution **after the 12th class day but before the end of the semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earns a cumulative total of 30 or more semester credit hours** for coursework successfully completed.
- Students enrolled in **dual credit coursework** are required to file a degree plan **not later than the end of the second regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student successfully completes 15 or more semester credit hours**.

Changes related to the degree plan began with the 2019-20 academic year.

Implementation Timeline

- **September 24, 2019**
Negotiated Rulemaking Committee meeting
- **January 23, 2020**
Rules adopted by the Coordinating Board
- **Fall 2020**
Institutions implemented

Study and Report on Core Curriculum

Study on Core Curriculum/Meta Majors – Required THECB appoint an advisory committee made up of representatives from community colleges and universities to study and make recommendations to the Legislature about the feasibility of implementing meta majors within the core curriculum, ways to support more efficient undergraduate transfer, and the efficacy of dividing the core curriculum.

- In collaboration with the advisory committee, the THECB conducted a study and made recommendations to the Legislature regarding:
 - the **feasibility of implementing statewide meta majors** in specific academic disciplines; and
 - the **effectiveness of the transfer of course credit between institutions for courses in the core curriculum**.
- The study included:
 - ✓ an analysis of the efficacy of dividing the recommended core curriculum for each meta major into a general academic and an academic discipline core curriculum;
 - ✓ methods to ensure the transferability and applicability of courses in the two core curricula; and
 - ✓ the potential inclusion of courses in the field of study curricula in the recommended core curriculum.

Implementation Timeline

- Fall 2020**
Negotiated Rulemaking Committee members met and provided feedback to draft report.
- November 1, 2020**
Report provided to the Legislature

Other Provisions

Articulation agreements SB 25 specifies a general academic teaching institution may enter into an articulation agreement with a lower-division institution of higher education to identify up to 60 semester credit hours for courses completed at the lower-division institution that must be accepted for credit toward specific course requirements at the general academic institution. Articulation agreements entered on or after September 1, 2019 may use approved fields of study curricula.

Release of student academic information The bill authorizes an institution of higher education or a school district to release student information to another institution of higher education for purposes of transferring course credit or awarding course credit in accordance with federal privacy laws. Student data may also be shared through an electronic data sharing and exchange platform operated by an agent of the institution or district that meets nationally accepted standards, conventions, and practices.

Appropriations for specific dual credit courses Semester credit hours for dual credit courses offered by institutions of higher education providing course credit in a field of study or a program of study curriculum are authorized to receive funding.

Recommended Course Sequences

Institutions are required to develop at least one recommended course sequence of lower-division courses for each certificate and degree program offered

- A course sequence must:
 - ✓ Identify all required lower-division courses for the applicable certificate or degree program
 - ✓ Include for each course, if applicable:
 - Texas Common Course number or course equivalent, and
 - ACGM course equivalent
 - ✓ Include a sequence of courses and be designed to enable a full-time student to obtain a certificate or degree within:
 - Two years for an associate's degree (60 SCH) or
 - Four years for a bachelor's degree (120 SCH)
 - ✓ Be posted on the web, in the institution's catalog, and must be submitted to the THECB.

Implementation Timeline

- **Fall 2021**
Institutions will begin reporting and publishing Recommended Course Sequences



Additional Transfer Effort



9

What is the potential with vertical transfer?

- Community colleges, which serve **70% of first- and second-year students** in the state of Texas, provide a vital path for students to earn a bachelor's degree. Ensuring that students who start their postsecondary education at a community college can easily navigate the vertical transfer process and seamlessly proceed to earn a four-year degree is key to increasing opportunities for social and economic mobility.
- Approximately **34% of bachelor's graduates** have completed 30 semester credit hours or more at a community college prior to graduation from a university.

10

What are the challenges with vertical transfer?

- Less than **35%** of students who start at a Texas community college transfer to a university within six years.
- An analysis of the last ten years of data shows that 83% of native junior-year students complete a degree within four years, while only 66% of transfer juniors complete within four years. In other words, transfer students complete their degrees at a rate that is **17 percentage points lower** than the students who started at the same institution in their cohort.

Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup

- Unclear transfer pathways, misalignment between community colleges and universities, and insufficient and confusing information about transfer are some barriers that make transfer difficult.
- The Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup met to collaboratively develop and make recommendations to substantially improve vertical transfer in Texas public higher education institutions.

Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup

Co-Chairs:

*Jacob Fraire, President and Chief Executive Officer,
Texas Association of Community Colleges*

*James Hallmark, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs,
Texas A&M University System*

60x30TX



Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board

60x30TX

13

Composition of the Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup

The transfer workgroup was composed of an equal number of representatives from public community colleges and universities and was supported by agency staff.

The group met from the end of April until mid-October regularly to study and make recommendations to improve vertical transfer.

14

14

Purpose of the Improving Transfer in Texas Workgroup

The workgroup met on a weekly basis (April – October 2020) to collaboratively develop and make recommendations to:

- substantially improve vertical transfer,
- substantially improve the applicability of credit to a major, and
- reduce the number of excess semester credit hours.

Transfer Framework

The Texas Transfer Framework will consist of the 60 SCH of lower-division courses that a student would complete to earn an associate degree that could be used to transfer.



This framework aims to optimize the course selections made by students, with the intent that students who complete 60 SCH will transfer to a university with junior standing in the major and the courses will apply to a degree program.

Transfer Framework

Texas Core Curriculum (TCC)

- A workgroup would identify the relevant TCC courses that are required for the discipline, with the intent of reducing the need for transfer students to re-take additional core courses that are major-specific.

Discipline Foundation Courses (DFC)

- Up to 12 SCH prescribed major-specific courses that will apply upon transfer to an institution that offers the corresponding major.

Directed Electives

- At least 6 SCH that address students' interests & ensure students' success in subsequent courses.
- Courses selected are based on:
 - Student's academic interest
 - Student's university of interest
 - Curriculum recommendations of sending/receiving institutions

Governance of the Texas Transfer Framework

Texas Transfer Advisory Committee (TTAC)

- The newly established advisory committee will consist of faculty and administrators with equal representation from 2-year and 4-year institutions and will include advising and student ex-officio members.
- The TTAC will be responsible for ensuring consistent review of all parts of the Texas Transfer Framework and will convene the Discipline-Specific Subcommittees on a regular basis.
- Recommends Discipline Foundation Courses (DFCs) to the Commissioner
- Proposes changes when framework is not having desired outcome

Discipline-Specific Subcommittees

- The subcommittees will consist of faculty with subject-matter expertise in each disciplinary area and will include equal representation from community colleges and universities.
- The subcommittees are responsible for recommending to the TTAC the courses for the Directed Electives.

Proposed Rules for the Texas Transfer Framework

The proposed rules for the Texas Transfer Framework were posted on Friday, January 15th to the Texas Register for public comment.

Comments on the proposed rules may be submitted to Stacey Silverman, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner, Academic Quality and Workforce, P.O. Box 12788, Austin, Texas 78711, or via email at AQW@highered.texas.gov. Comments will be accepted for thirty days following publication of the proposal in the Texas Register.

Questions and Comments